

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A hearing aid, comprising:
 - an input to receive an input signal and output an analog signal;
 - a variable gain amplifier to selectively compress the analog signal;
 - an analog to digital ~~converter~~ converter receiving the analog signal and outputting a first digital signal;
 - a digital gain control to control gain of the variable gain amplifier;
 - a compression recapture system outputting a second digital signal that essentially represents a compressed portion of the analog signal; and
 - an output to reproduce the input signal based on the first and second digital signals.
2. (Original) The hearing aid of claim 1, wherein the compression recapture system is a feed forward circuit.
3. (Original) The hearing aid of claim 2, wherein the compression recapture system includes a transfer function element.
4. (Original) The hearing aid of claim 3, wherein the transfer function element maps the second digital signal from the digital gain control to a compression recapture signal.
5. (Original) The hearing aid of claim 4, wherein the compression recapture signal is a digital signal.

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6. (Original) The hearing aid of claim 5, wherein the output includes a multiplier that digitally combines the compression recapture signal and the first digital signal to essentially digitally reproduce the input signal.
7. (Original) The hearing aid of claim 6, wherein the output includes a digital signal processor that receives a combined digital signal from the multiplier.
8. (Currently Amended) The hearing aid of claim 1, wherein the analog to digital ~~converter~~ converter includes a threshold, and the variable gain amplifier compresses a portion of the analog signal that is above the threshold.
9. (Previously Presented) The hearing aid of claim 1, wherein the digital gain control includes an inhibitor to inhibit distortions and an adjuster to adjust the gain of the variable gain amplifier, wherein the inhibitor digitally smoothes an envelope of the first digital signal so as to inhibit distortions arising from apparent modulation of the first digital signal.
10. (Original) The hearing aid of claim 1, wherein the input includes a filter to block low frequencies in the input signal from the analog signal.
11. (Previously Presented) The hearing aid of claim 1, wherein the digital gain control receives the first digital signal to control gain of the variable gain amplifier
12. (Original) The hearing aid of claim 1, wherein the digital gain control outputs a control signal, and the second digital signal is a mathematical inverse of the control signal.
13. (Currently Amended) The hearing aid of claim 12, wherein the digital gain control includes an digital adjuster to adjust the gain and a digital to analog ~~converter~~ converter connected between digital adjuster and the variable gain amplifier.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 14,~~ A method of restoring a compressed signal in an input stage of a device, comprising:

detecting when an input signal is above a threshold value to produce a gain control signal;

reducing gain of an amplifier to a value below the threshold value based on the gain control signal; and

restoring an output signal of the input stage to include a compressed portion of the input signal,

wherein detecting includes producing a digital gain control signal using a feed back approach.

16. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 14,~~ A method of restoring a compressed signal in an input stage of a device, comprising:

detecting when an input signal is above a threshold value to produce a gain control signal;

reducing gain of an amplifier to a value below the threshold value based on the gain control signal; and

restoring an output signal of the input stage to include a compressed portion of the input signal,

wherein restoring includes applying an inverse of the gain control signal to restore a compressed portion of the input signal.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein restoring compression is done using a feed forward approach.

18. (Currently Amended) An apparatus, comprising:

- an input to receive an input signal and output an analog signal;
- a variable gain amplifier to selectively compress the analog signal;
- an analog to digital ~~converter~~ converter receiving the analog signal and outputting a first digital signal;
- digital gain control means for controlling gain of the variable gain amplifier;
- compression recapture means for outputting a second digital signal that represents a compressed portion of the analog signal; and
- an output to reproduce the input signal based on the first and second digital signals.

19. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 18, further comprising transfer function means for mapping the second digital signal from the digital gain control means to a compression recapture signal.

20. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the digital gain control means includes an inhibitor to inhibit distortions and an adjuster to adjust the gain of the variable gain amplifier, wherein the inhibitor digitally smoothes an envelope of the first digital signal so as to inhibit distortions arising from apparent modulation of the first digital signal.